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THE WORTHLESSNESS OF CHRISTIANITY

faithfully yours
Carlos Ycempo

THE

WORTHLESSNESS OF CHRISTIANITY

BY

A JAPANESE

WATTS & CO.,
17, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.
1904

faithfully yours
Cortez Ysrumpo

THE WORTHLESSNESS OF CHRISTIANITY

BY

A JAPANESE

WATTS & CO.,
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1904

"The general consequence of vice is misery, and this consequence is the precise reason why an action is termed vicious." —T. H. MALTHUS.

"The sin of Faith, or credence apart from cause, prostitutes reason in giving assent to propositions which are neither self-evident nor adequately proved." —T. H. HUXLEY.

PREFACE

THE object of Religion, as of Philosophy, is said to be the solution of two problems. It is to explain the "How" and the "Why" of things. Christianity explains the "How" with an account of the Creation; it explains the "Why" with an account of the Resurrection. But other religions exist which accept neither the one nor the other, or not in this form. The question at once arises, What is this Christian religion? Is it the only religion? Is it the only true one? Or is it so much truer than all the others, either separately or combined, that men will accept it at sight? They

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have but to comprehend to be converted. Belief follows baptism. Confirmation strengthens belief. Communion refreshes it. And the Burial Service wafts the weary old soul up to heaven. Some eminently Christian souls do not ask for this. A grand old German who had toiled arduously and earnestly all his days had these words inscribed on his tombstone: "In the true faith I die; in the true faith I hope for salvation; but, Lord, let me rest, for I am very weary."

Such a spirit as that is above religion, and would have done equally well without the Christianity. As a matter of fact, there are plenty of other religions. Oriental scholars know of eighty or ninety. Board-school children at the English State-schools write in their copy-books, "Caius Gracchus was a Pagan."

So they, too, know that all men are not Christians. They are not, however, informed what Caius Gracchus missed by this, or how he would have been bettered if he had been baptised. When people have done teaching him, the Board-school boy may find out that, though some religions may seem more absurd than Christianity, some seem less so. They have, of course, many points in common. Every one of them is divine, and not one of them is true. The one external verity common to all religions is that the broad outlines are utterly false; the only things that are not false are details, *obiter dicta*, and occasional observations.

The facts or occurrences on which their dogmas rest either never took place at all, or did not take place as

stated. Fine old saws, ancient legends fruity apothegms matured in wood, or frivolous fairy tales, are the main ingredients of every religion. A semi-divine prophet is usually added, or maybe he is found, sometimes in a Palace, sometimes near a Well, and sometimes in a Manger. But *cui bono*, and why believe it? Each religion conveys a lesson of a kind, but what is the lesson, and on what is it founded? The lesson of the Christian religion is that of Christ. Christ is the first Messiah, Conqueror, or Saviour—and also the last —who has ever presented the idea of humanity "being all-powerful by suffering and resignation, and of triumphing over force by purity of heart." But is such a lesson at all possible or attainable? Can it be practically realised?

You may know that you have won by your resignation and purity of heart, but will anyone else know it? You may not look like it; you may look as if you had lost. Somehow, though, success need not necessarily appeal to us, neither need suffering. As soon as we know the tale of the worm we may all of us love him, "but the victor need not explain." The true path is somewhere between these: "Somewhere between deserving a position and pushing yourself into one." A stubborn resolution and a determined doggedness in adversity, coupled with energy and vigour when fortune calls—these are the winning cards, if only we've been dealt them. The heart beating high with hope, the character that will not despair—here is the real gospel of life and the secret of success. But

what if our heart *won't* beat high and if our character *will* despair? What then? Well, "we must do our little part with our neighbours on foot," I suppose. But we need not admire ourselves for it, nor ask anyone else to. And how hard it is! Still, away with a religion that tells us we're winning really — if we only knew, if we only knew. No; the truth in utter nakedness is better and finer than such a meagre consolation as that. What is Christ's contention founded on? There is no rational basis for it. On the average, and apart from ill-luck, men deserve their misery. "The fault, dear Brutus, lies not in our stars, but in ourselves that we are underlings." At the worst, none of us is too poor to die.

But the Christian religion, in addition

to this wretched lesson, comprises the whole code of ethics and morals to those accepting it. The nature of good and evil is not only not inquired into, but it is a sin to do so if the resulting conclusions vary from those authorised by Scripture.

For instance, the English Church has ever taken a deal of interest in chastity. It used at one time to insist on celibacy; now it is for matrimony and fruitful families. As an actual fact, chastity and morality have little or nothing to do with one another. Some very carnal men are most moral and upright, while many celibates are mean and equivocating. Sensuality, so far from being a sign of sin, is a sign of health; and no man entirely devoid of it will ever make a really good father, any more than a man

lacking in ear can make a good musician. The perfect man has some ear for music and some sensuality, and what he lacks in these respects are deficiencies which must be accounted for in classing his type of humanity. To be insufficiently carnal is almost a sin. The Churches are quite at sea here. They never reason as to what is right and wrong, but follow certain prejudices and hide-bound bigotry laid down by Moses.

Several thinkers and moralists have lived since Moses. Yet read the following from the *Daily Graphic* of May 27th, 1904:—

BISHOP INGRAM ON PUBLIC MORALITY.

THE EVIL OF FLATS.

A conference called together by the Bishop of London for the Promotion of Public Morality was held at Caxton Hall yesterday afternoon.

The Bishop of London, who presided, said their object was to get together the power of all right-minded people in London. They wished to make the metropolis a better and a purer place. They did not exist for the purpose of creating private virtue; their work was to improve the public morality. They thought it intolerable that their city should be a centre of all kinds of temptations for the young. In all the boroughs of London branches of the Public Morality Council had been established, and the borough municipalities had listened very favourably to their overtures, and had worked with them. It was very important that the police should feel that they had the moral backing of the citizens of London, and he was glad to acknowledge his gratitude to the police for the better state of things. He would like to see the present laws with regard to bad houses put into force. There should be no option of a fine for offenders. He would like also to see some notice taken of the mischief done by flats—they were not covered by law. He hoped that the Aliens Bill would be the means of keeping out foreigners of both sexes, who were responsible for much of this mischief. In conclusion, the Bishop appealed for funds—they wanted a thousand people to pay a guinea apiece to help on the work.

Mr. W. A. Coote gave it as his opinion that London was 50 per cent. better all round than it had been. There was no room for pessimism on the morality question.

Mrs. Creighton appealed for greater interest in the rescue work. They wanted the borough councils to call conferences of all those in their districts who are interested in matters of social purity.

The Rev. F. B. Meyer said during the past seven or eight years they had closed 350 bad houses in Lambeth. In his opinion, they ought to deal with those in the streets. He believed that if the houses were closed the streets would be cleared. Owners of such property should be dealt with drastically. If some legislation were not soon forthcoming for dealing with flats, the system of living in flats would develop into the greatest curse that London had ever known.

Is the Bishop's idea of "right-minded people" correct? Is the Bishop's idea of "bad" correct? Neither drink nor sensuality is essentially "bad." It is a question of degree. His ideas of bad are bad, though he may not be. Those desiring such things have a perfect right to them. "The liberty of each limited by the like liberty of all" is the only correct text. Nice people have nice

pleasures, and less nice people less nice ones. But no one has a right to interfere till the pleasure is not only essentially wrong, but actually injurious to others besides the sinner and family. Burglary and theft are always wrong everywhere; but plenty of other things interdicted by Bishops are not really wrong at all. Fancy a man judging the morality of a city by counting the concubines! You might as well judge of a summer by counting the cuckoos. Wormy springs and plenty of cuckoos mean a fine summer! while well-filled inns and numerous concubines mean a wicked city! There is no sort of connection. Yet the "Rev." Meyer says the curse of the age is the height of the flats and the width of their wantonness. He asks for guineas and legislation to suppress them.

He had far better stick to his wormy spring-times and his cuckoos, and leave the concubines alone in their flats. A code of ethics framed among the interstices of Scripture and convention, aided here and there by reports of proceedings under criminal law, may produce fine Christians, but they will be pitiful men.

Like most Oriental religions, Christianity is unsuited to industrialism. The watch-words of industrialism must be energy, self-reliance, and independence. The watch-words of Christianity are resignation and apathy. "Consider the lilies, how they grow." But how are we thereby "to dare do all that doth become a man"? Not by considering lilies. Such teaching produces free libraries, State schools, and "A chance for the poor man's child." The only

chances we deserve are those of our own making. They should not come down to us by the compulsory robbing of other people. "*Suum cuique*—To each his own," wrote Seneca, the Pagan, and a very sound doctrine too. "Nirvana," said Buddha, "is that state of mind brought about by right conduct and right feelings." This conception is as much before salvation by faith as "to each his own" is before the compulsory chance for the poor man's child. The latter sounds very generous, but it is also very unjust. It may be a Christian Charity feeling for others. But what about compelling others to feel so too? Is that just, or even generous?

Not Christianity and not convention, but the nature of right and wrong, the nature of happiness, the rules of life and

health, and the "liberty of each to do that which injures no one else"—these are what men should seek. Christianity may say that man is vile, his pleasures pitiful, and his wants worthless. But what of it? If man thought so, too, he would cease to wish for such things. His very vileness gives him title to his claim. Bad pleasures work their own cure. They are bad because they are at variance with the laws of "Being," and do not avail towards life. They both wear out and kill their patrons. They must have considerable attraction and fitness to the particular being, or they would not last. Pleasures sought except from desire will afford little gratification. The choice is smaller than ethical reformers admit. To wish well and to desire right constitutes perfection.

The best receipt for stagnation and decay would be to have no wishes. Bad ones are preferable to none at all. Vice, so-called, has before now been the emancipator of the human mind. Licentiousness mainly, if not alone, saved England from a sour-faced, hang-dog Puritanism. Licentiousness may yet save us from McDougal tyrannies and Vigilance Committees. What else have we strong enough, active enough, to rescue us from a flaccid holiness and an anæmic calm? State Churches are just as bad, and quite as unjust, as State drinking-houses or State houses of ill-fame. In fact, the Churches are worse. For a nation that forbade Churches would merely show the absence of religion and in a bigoted form; but a nation that suppressed all inns and all prostitutes would show an

absence of animal life, and in so bigoted a form as could only result in effeminacy and decadence. *Suum cuique*, let the Church patron pay for his house, and let the patrons of other houses pay for theirs. But away with all compulsion and interference. The vile person, if vigorous, contains the germs of improvement. The cobwebs of Christianity obscure our vision. But liberty and latitude are the first steps. Unfortunately, though the first steps may be clear enough, people do not seem disposed to take them, and least of all, perhaps, from a Japanese. Hence this little book will meet with but scant favour from Christians—or Cossacks. However, this is no fault of the author. "He can give men a reason, but not the wisdom to profit by it."

"Pleasures raise the tide of life, maintain constitutional vigour, and conduce to capacity for enjoyment in posterity. Persistence in dull, monotonous lives by parents diminishes the ability in descendants to make the best of what gratifications fall to them."

—HERBERT SPENCER'S *Data of Ethics.*

"Certain words are uttered for the hundredth time by those least capable of thinking, who believe that they have only to utter these words with an open mouth and the air of an intelligent sheep in order to have spoken the greatest wisdom."

—SCHOPENHAUER.

THE WORTHLESSNESS OF CHRISTIANITY

WHAT part of our daily life is in any way regulated by Christianity? What motive for a single action does Christianity supply? What good deed is promoted? What misconduct is checked? Probably none. We need something more vivid and tangible before our eyes as a motive-power than a vague conception of eternal judgment. A promise of penal servitude in this life is a stronger deterrent than a day of judgment in the life to come. A good man will do good actions with or without such threats and promises. A bad man is similarly affected—*i.e.*, not at all. Neither right principles nor right conduct will be attained thus. As a motive-power Christianity is inoperative. As a source of

mischief, on the other hand, it plays a big part, and with considerable success.

The reason is this: Christianity does not supply a proper and rational standard of right and wrong. Accordingly, like Bishop Ingram and other prelates, it is ethically harmful. Its standard rests on certain rules handed down and accepted without inquiry. These rules may have been the best possible in Palestine at the time of the Crucifixion, but even then they were not rational or founded on reason. In 1904, in England and Japan, many of them are unsuitable and wrong, as well as irrational. The demands of ethics, like everything else, must be subjected to reason and experience. As a fact, certain actions are right and wrong in themselves, essentially and innately, and are in no way altered by enactments or "scriptural revelations." The abstract conception of right and wrong forms a far higher and more correct code for guidance than anything laid down in the

Thirty-nine Articles. The creed and doctrine are ethically rotten. They interfere with the proper conception of ethics, and strengthen that mischievous belief in the efficacy of dogmas and legislation. The early Christian recognised only the divine law; the human law of his country he scorned, but made the best of. The modern Christian has reversed this practice. He obeys the laws of his country, and makes the best of the divine ones. That is to say, where the divine law tallies with the law of his country he obeys it. Where the divine law is not comprised in the judicial code he modifies, or adapts, it to his nature. Such a conception of equity entails evil. There is, as it were, a law-supported wrong-doing, or offences that bring no penalty. Ethics are regarded, like divine law, as some abstract conception, impossible of reality, and of little practical moment; while the real and practical right and wrong depend upon legislation, penalties, and law books.

This is a profoundly wrong impression. It is the parent of countless injustices. It exaggerates the function of Government, and in a most unwarrantable manner. Right and wrong really depend upon the laws of Nature. Good is the result of right conduct, or conduct in harmony with Nature's laws. Evil is the result of bad conduct. Where wrong has been done mischief results, not necessarily on the doer, but mischief resulting is what makes the action wrong. The doer of a bad action is also made worse, in that each bad action makes him more likely to commit another.

Our actions and motives follow "the line of least resistance." It is fortunate, perhaps, that it is so; for if a man were to become rich by a series of successful frauds, and then to become good and estimable, it might defeat virtue. It is well that, a man having once become bad, he remains bad. His character and his nature lies that way, and he usually

becomes worse. Even if he escapes, he is rarely happy. A man's character, says Schopenhauer, is but little alterable. Except from misconception his act shows what he is, and "to forgive is to throw away dearly-bought experience. Under the same circumstances the same character will act as before." This is a sounder doctrine than the parable of the Prodigal Son. It *pays* to be good. Honesty, as a fact, *is* the best policy. It is not a nominal truth. It is as reliable as Bradshaw. Dishonesty is bad. "It may be hard for honesty to get on, but it is harder still for dishonesty to get off." In the long run this is so. Everything essentially wrong is bad. The question is, How bad and what penalties? Penalties are the means adopted by society to prevent us injuring one another. Society should have no sort of right to prevent us injuring ourselves. We may like to injure ourselves, and no one can tell us what we like but

ourselves. To prevent us injuring one another society attempts to estimate penalties by the amount of harm done. Swindling in pence depends somewhat on the number of pence involved. To shoot at a man with felonious intent and miss him is regarded as a lesser evil than to shoot at him and hit him. We are probably right in this; but intrinsically the two deeds are the same, equally bad, equally wrong, and apart from the result. Somewhere here, if anywhere, is the place of religion.

Religious, or abstract, equity should prevent us from passing over any essentially evil act as nothing, because no visible ill resulted. Abstract equity should so far extend into law that no essentially evil act should go unpunished. Not that shooting and missing and shooting and hitting should ever be regarded as the same; but neither should they be regarded as entirely different. Similarly in small things. The fraud

that failed, the interrupted burglary, the thwarted thief! The result is not everything. Neither is it nothing. Some involuntary feeling that our Will cannot master, something that we cannot suppress, may cause our most evil of passions to fail in its full intent or object. In some ways this may be contemptible, in other ways it may be very much the reverse. Religious equity should stand alone and uncomposed, without Pity or Mercy, ignoring all circumstances and results, and damning the action to the uttermost letter of the law, simply on the ground of the foulness of its nature. Surely this is something more profound, more intense, and more sublime than forgetting evil, forgiving your neighbour, or loving your enemies, or any other utterances of Christ.

Briefly, the case is this. Different things are in themselves innately and essentially good or bad and right or wrong. Neither laws, religions, nor

customs can in any way alter the nature of an act. Good in the philosophic sense means good for something. A good boot and a good act cannot be successfully segregated and separated as resting on a different basis and of an entirely different species. For, just as animate and inanimate overlap one another, and just as vegetable and animal life have no impenetrable barrier between them, and varieties are met with which experts fail to class, so goodness ramifies from a good cesspool to transcendent virtue. They are founded on the same root. It is so. It is no one's fault, and no one is to blame. You will not alter the matter by crucifying someone. The cause and origin of it all may be utility, and probably is. But though the origin of the notion of goodness, and the ethical principle thus derived from it, may be of great interest, and is frequently written about, these deep questions are of no practical value, except in

so far as they supersede so-called revelation.

A notion of goodness or rightness, or a moral sense, undoubtedly exists now. How it arose is, perhaps, immaterial. It is to be found in various stages of development in various human beings. None are quite destitute of it. The question for a rational person is rather what are the dictates of his moral sense, not who explained it to him or how he got it. To-day we should use it. For instance, when one doctor, as in England, performs an internal operation on a woman for appendicitis and kills her and gets a knighthood, and another doctor performs an operation for abortion successfully and without killing her and gets seven years' penal servitude, it is not enough to call the second an illegal operation and calmly dismiss the matter. The existence of a law is not the question, the question is how far an existing law is just and tallies with

the nature of things, and whether the matter forbidden is essentially wrong or is merely enacted to be so. This does not necessarily mean that every question of right and wrong will mean a long inquiry and an eight hours' debate. On the contrary, there is rarely the slightest doubt about the matter. There would be still less if Christianity had not for centuries cheated and chicaned our moral sense, instead of encouraging it to form its own conclusions from the nature of things. The laws of nature have ever been before us. Why should we give preference to the laws of Moses? Let us examine these.

The Ten Commandments of Moses (B.C. 1400) are supposed to be the laws for observance handed down to mortals by the word of Jahveh. Three of them are still observed. The rest are not. The three that have survived are:—*Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness.* Why

have these three survived? Because the actions forbidden are essentially wrong. Our natures tell us so. We know that it is so. No human being since he has lost the hair on his body and the volatility of his ears has ever thought otherwise. Shintoists, Brahmins, Confucians, and men who have never heard of Moses, are all equally agreed on the matter. Murder, theft, and lies are bad things, resulting in evil, and they are everywhere regarded as such. To even mention it seems almost a work of supererogation. Their repetition, however, together with bread and red wine, forms an important part of the sacramental service.

The other seven Commandments relate to things not essentially wrong, and they are not obeyed. Consequently they do harm in two ways. Firstly, by the forbidding of actions that are not essentially wrong, actions that are wrong seem less so. Secondly, "by association with rules that cannot be obeyed, rules that can be

obeyed lose their authority." In other words, to place working on Sunday and the committing of theft in the same category is simply wicked. Harm is done both directly and indirectly, both by implication and by association. Such a method could be confidently recommended in order to blur and blot our natural sense of equity and proportion. Let us consider the seven remaining Commandments.

1. *Thou shalt have none other gods but me.*—Me? Me? Me? but out of Europe who are you? Brahma I know, and Shinto I know, but who are you?

2. *Thou shalt make thyself no image, or likeness, of anything on earth, under water, or in heaven.* Why not? Artists, sculptors, and cinematographers do something of the kind, and become famous. Even the man with the kodak is unpleasant rather than criminal.

3. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.* But how else are

you to take it? The name is so taken all day long in England during every existing sport or pastime. In billiard saloons the players appear to do so almost as frequently as they chalk their cues, though with less result. If men took the Lord's name and not in vain, it would appear in the billiard association rules, and the game would be "Spot stroke and Lord's name barred," or "all in," as the case might be. "All in" would still, probably, be the most popular game.

4. *As to working on the seventh day*: nearly every one does. Some of us have really no time to work except on Sunday. We work for others during the week; for ourselves on Sunday. A child may see its father smugly repeating this Commandment and breaking it on one and the same day. Then, too, which is the seventh day? A Jew says Saturday, but in England he must be idle on Sunday too. What a religion!

10. *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's*

house. On the contrary, covet it, work for it, and buy him out.

5. *As to honouring your parents:* this is quite a minor matter, and may depend upon the parent. But it should be remembered: "Ye gather not grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles." You are the son of your father. If he is a "waster," you may be one too. For you are the son of a "waster," even if no worse. As a saying it may stand, but not as a commandment.

7. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.* As stated, this sounds wrong. But passionate love is not intended by nature to be unrequited or disregarded. A few words by a priest in a church cannot alter the nature of any act. Passionate adoration excuses all things. The passion forgives the sin, not the cleric nor the holy orders. The foundation of everything is somewhere in deep love. Call this anything you like, but don't think that it makes the slightest difference, nor

imagine anyone else does. Our natures tell us many truths that are not "revealed."

Now, to forbid ten things as eternally punishable, only three of which are wrong, is no bad commencement even for Christianity. The really wrong becomes confused with the merely prohibited. The ethical nature becomes stunted and ill-developed, and exactly in the proportion in which it receives such teaching. A true Christian cannot reason. To him keeping his hat on in church, or playing cards on Sunday, ranks in badness somewhere between robbing the Poor Box and appropriating Papa's new boots. Nevertheless, in Christian countries the laws still continue on the same senseless basis. It is botching, not building. Jerry building in houses and in "commandments" will some day join hands and be united with punic faith and a Nonconformist conscience.

In England the will of the nominal

majority, not necessarily a real one, decides as to what is right or wrong, and they imagine that they have this power. Some pretty pictures result. Among the wage-drawing classes in England it is wrong not to send children from three to fourteen to State schools. Yet everyone should know that nearly all so-called education (*i.e.*, book work) is harmful. Book work before ten is criminal really. Only those come forward as thinkers whose minds have resisted the stuffing process. The public schools extinguish many thinkers. The State schools will extinguish many more. The class that produces thinkers, so far, has been the irregular middle class, educated with great variety, after no particular pattern, and sometimes hardly at all. On this question majorities have the same right as kings. That is, none at all. Fancy right and wrong depending upon 670 persons sitting at Westminster and watching one another! If they would

first limit the subjects on which they had a right to legislate, the country would be better off. This catch-vote equity making inequity equitable is the horror of all sensible men, who are, however, in England, a negligible quantity. The opinion of the Brush Makers' Union or the Aerated Bottle Manufacturers is much more important. Needless to say, all Christians are perfectly prepared to constitute anything in the world as right or wrong at a minute's notice. Should the minority obey? No. It is man's duty to disregard and to break unjust laws. By each day that they are submitted to they become the harder to overturn. But, owing to Christianity, this is not the view at all. The doctrine in England is—Submit, but agitate. Fortunately for them, they produce stouter stuff than this—a stuff that hints to us of what there is in man; a stuff that refuses to submit, and, in refusing, creates the agitation and brings the matter before

men's eyes. When one sees the pitiful herd around, and the collective wisdom selected by this herd doing their best to hamper and throttle mankind with regulation after regulation, vexation after vexation, and petty tyrannies by the hour, it seems impossible to understand how, where, and whence individuals come forward and stand firm—individuals who say: "This last regulation is a fundamental breach of my freedom. I may suffer, but I will not submit. While I live I will fight." Who produces these men? Where do they come from? Undaunted and untamed, they fight and fight, in prison and out of prison; they die, and are forgotten. And the foul herd begin again.

There is something noble in us all, perhaps, could we but bring it to light. Christianity has done what it could to sap this something, and to rob the human race of all originality and individuality and independence. To-day in the London

Police Courts cases of theft, drunkenness, and robbery are to be seen standing side by side with men who have not sent their children to the State schools, or who have refused to vaccinate them, or who have refused to pay a rate to supply schools to teach what they disapprove of. Now, what wrong have these last done? Have they done anything wrong at all? Does their act transgress Nature's laws in any way? No. In each case their action is perfectly right, and the only people who have done wrong are the magistrates inflicting the fine. And only the magistrates, for the police constables may be considered to act without option, and to be compelled to carry out the law of the land and execute the summons. But Justices of the Peace are not appointed, like the police, to execute injustice, either in the King's name or in God's name, or in any other name. Justice is what they are appointed to administer. It is said that those enforcing the laws are more

important than the laws themselves. If this be so, the English magistrates have a pretty record. We read of men hanged for sheep stealing, and they would be so to-day if the juries had not refused to convict. Witches were invariably condemned to death, and frequently burnt. That was yesterday. To-day men are imprisoned for refusing to put the pus of a diseased cow into the arm of a healthy infant. "It is not our fault," say the Bench; "law is law." But when the English law allows a man to refuse vaccination by means of a conscientious objection, what do these rigorous exponents of the law and these sticklers for convention do then? They refuse the objection! They fine the man and ignore the law. The local papers report the practices of the day. Take the following:—

LIVERPOOL ANTI-VACCINATOR FINED.

To the Editor of "The Evening Express."

SIR,—I see from the report in this

evening's *Express* that a man was fined by Mr. Stewart to-day for not having his child vaccinated, notwithstanding that he had twice applied for exemption, but without success. To say that this is a travesty of justice is a meagre description. Surely Mr. Stewart must himself laugh up his sleeve at the absurdity of the situation. I write, however, to take exception to Mr. Stewart's remark that he could not help the man. Mr. Stewart had evidently forgotten that, under Section 31 of the Act of 1867, he is not bound to inflict a penalty if the defendant "can show some reasonable ground for his omission to carry the order into effect." It would be difficult to imagine a more reasonable ground than the one offered by the defendant in this case. Apart altogether from the merits or demerits of vaccination, it is nothing less than a public scandal that conscientious citizens should be hailed before Mr. Stewart in this fashion, and be so flagrantly jockeyed out of their legal rights. COMMON-SENSE.

Liverpool, June 1st, 1904.

In this case the magistrate is a paid

stipendiary. Paid stipendiaries are, as a rule, specimens of the English Barrister class, therefore ignorance cannot be pleaded. In this case prejudice is the cause. The magistrate has it rooted in his head that a man who is not vaccinated is a danger to the J.P. himself. Hence, his personal animosity is too much for his sense of justice. He is, in passing, quite wrong in his bigotry. Small-pox did decline immediately after the cow-pox delusion. Why? Because previous to cow-pox people were inoculated with small-pox. Sanitation and infection were not at that date understood. Consequently each person inoculated with small-pox was a walking encyclopædia of infection to his house and district, whom he usually succeeded in thoroughly infecting. Naturally, the substitution of any delusion, however foul, was an improvement on the former practice, which, though sound enough for the person inoculated, was pernicious to everyone

else. Consequently, the cow-pox delusion, aided by better treatment and improved dwelling houses, apparently checked the disease.

Unfortunately, Christians never reason. They have been brought up too strenuously on the laws of Moses. Christianity is their staff. Could they reason more, and did they attend church less, they might improve. A little thought is worth more to mankind than any number of attendances at "the Lord's table." One page of Herbert Spencer is worth two cases of sacramental wine. Law is law, say the Christian J.P.s. But what about laws on the statute-book that are not enforced? Few laws have been repealed till human nature has refused to enforce them. And what about a law like the conscientious objection, that is on the statute-book and is yet inoperative from bigotry? If J.P.s are so anxious to stick to law, come right or wrong, why not follow the custom of the dexterous

Cadi of the Moslems in enforcing the Koran, who, in matters where the laws of the Koran conflict with equity, do as follows :—"On these occasions the Cadi respectfully places on his head the holy volume, and substitutes a dexterous interpretation more apposite to the principles of equity, and the manners and policy of the times"? Would that J.P.s would follow suit. But in justice Christians are ever backward. Some J.P.s sit on law books, but no J.P. has ever put a law book either on, or even in, his head.

Think more, read more, and pray less, is our advice to Christian J.P.s. Every week just now they are fining parents for not sending their children to the State schools. Orphans earning money for a sick mother are committing a highly indictable offence unless they are over fourteen! It is a very bad case! They must surely know that a doctor's certificate is the only recognised excuse! Save on one memorable occasion where an extra-

ordinarily merciful Bench dismissed the case because the boy had three miles to walk and no boots. As a matter of fact, three miles to walk with no food in the stomach is worse than double the distance with no boots. But the Bench "are more learned with their eyes than with their ears." They see no boots, but not no food. Why, in Nature's laws, should anyone go to school at all? It is no advantage. Just like Christianity, it will not make a dull lad clever, nor a bad one honest. Moreover, in the words of Huxley, there is no such thing as an uneducated man. Experience teaches him. He always has pain and pleasure at his elbow telling him what to do and what to avoid. What he learns thus he learns without thought and in a very different way from lesson-books. A true education would keep a boy from books till twelve. The State Church and the State education and the State justices have much in common. Like

the Laws of Moses, they do for the herd. They cannot differentiate and distinguish between what is essentially wrong and what they don't like. Trouble results, and trouble will continue to result. It is building law on a wrong basis. Brave men, as was said, are born here and there who fight this battle for us over and over again. But the thick-eared herd seem to rapidly recover back nearly all that has been won so nobly, so dearly, and at such fearful cost. Possibly some day some instinct within us, some "man within the breast," will be found to be a better test of truth and justice than either the laws of Moses or the counting of votes.

The whole outlook of civilisation in the West, and therefore in the East too, is to-day most unpromising and retrograde. There is less liberty in England to-day than there was in 1800. No man's conscience can be counted as a portion of practical politics, or to be in any way

recognised by the legislature, unless it be a religious one. The religious conscience in England, which, as it happened, was backed by an instinct for freedom which nothing could crush, has played a useful part. Battle after battle has been won from the State Church in religious freedom. But real freedom is further off than ever. Owing to Christianity, conscience and religion are inseparable in the public mind, and what freedom has been won in religion has been lost elsewhere. With the decay of Church supremacy the principle of freedom, always hazy, has been lost sight of. The compulsory church rates, in which every man had to pay for the upkeep of his parish church, whether he used it or not, were finally abolished in 1868. The battle was won simply by stout-hearted men who suffered imprisonment rather than pay. However, there is, in 1903, an education rate on similar lines and equally unjust, and more so in

that it includes compulsory attendance. It is both pitiable and lamentable. But, owing to Christianity having for generations successfully stunted all rational inquiry into right and wrong, only a few persons perceive this. Pick up any local paper and see the principle at work. The *Cambridge Express*, May 14th, 1904:—

SCHOOL CASES.

Harriet Pryke, of Fordham, was fined 2s. 6d., and George Fuller, of Burwell, 5s., for not sending their children regularly to school.

Henry Knott, carrier, of Burwell, for employing his son, a boy of school age, was fined 5s.

The costs in each case will be some four or five shillings more. Yet that a carrier should be taxed to pay for schools he disapproves of and thinks do harm, and then should be fined about 9s. 6d., together with the loss of a day's work, for not sending his son there regularly from three years of age to fourteen, is a proud

record for a free country. Unfortunately, Japan is copying all this. England won her position by having slightly more freedom than other countries. Does this freedom continue? "Only by freedom can men ever learn their folly; and, therefore, to destroy liberty is to cut off the very conditions of improvement." The blinkers of religion have shut your eyes to this, and except in religion there is no freedom in England, and even the principle of religious freedom is disappearing. Your temperance legislation, your building by-laws, your municipal socialism, your Vaccination Acts, your Irish Land Acts, and your Education Act show an ignorance of every principle of liberty that should be dear to man. The conscientious objector was only primarily allowed because his religion condemned vaccination. Jesus was not vaccinated, so faith forbade. Reason alone is disregarded, and a conscientious objection, founded on Herbert Spencer or on an

Encyclopædia, is usually refused. Christianity and a real sense of freedom are incompatible. Christianity and socialism walk hand in hand. A State Church, State education, Christian magistrates with ethics founded on Moses, and unlimited State functions, is the road to socialism. If only atheists could be magistrates, something might be done temporarily. But the real remedy is to limit the State functions, and take care that nothing is forbidden that is not essentially wrong.

The point Christianity usually falls back on as a last refuge is its connection with the sanctity of love and marriage. Never was a more gratuitous piece of impertinence propounded. There is no real connection between them. Monogamy is no original part of Christianity. It was previous to Christianity. Offshoots of Christianity, such as Mohammedans and Mormons, disapprove of it. Christians, Mohammedans, Jews, and Mormons,

all have the same Father or God. It is with them merely a question of what Messiah they select. The choice is between Jesus, Mahomet, Joseph Smith of Sharon, Vermont, U.S.A., or none. Jesus is supported by four Evangelists, Mahomet by the Koran, which he wrote himself; and Joseph Smith was testified to by Heber C. Kimball and Brigham Young. Not one is supported by reason. In each case the Almighty Father or God is the same, that is the Bible Deity, who never mentions monogamy, and many of whose chosen kings kept a bevy of wives. It is evident that Christianity may find people monogamistic, but it does not make them so. As many races were monogamistic before Christianity came, there seems to be no reason why they should not remain so after it has departed. Atheists recognise the nuptial noose as constantly as other folk. It is mainly a matter of convenience or custom. It is quite possible that many men would

remain constant without any noose at all, let alone the religious one. Certainly many birds do. However desirable the ceremonious part of marriage may be, the religious portion of it is not so. It is an anachronism, and robs the ceremony of its depth and sincerity. Veiling the bride from top to toe and leading her up to the altar and singing "A voice that breathed o'er Eden," and much of the service, is almost absurd, if not actually so. It were better omitted. And that such a ceremony should be permitted to take place before a man is twenty-five or a woman twenty is very wrong. Such a permanent and sacred union should not be binding in Church or State till the parties are old enough to thoroughly realise the important nature of the step that they are contemplating. Without the marriage ceremony in England, or attendance at a registry office, all unions are regarded as illicit. Even a registry office, in the opinion of the

faithful, does not wed the parties in God's eyes.

Is, then, this Christianity, that so many think divine, any advantage? Is it the root of all goodness? Is it the bulwark of law and order? Is it the mainspring of conscience? Does it heighten the solemnity of marriage? And might not we be better off without it?

The advantages that have been derived from Christianity in England, in addition to the wars, and massacres, and martyrdoms, are:—

1. A confused and erroneous notion of ethics.

2. A barbaric marriage service, which is almost ridiculous.

3. A practice of repeating what is not believed, bareheaded and with great solemnity, thus creating a portentous aptitude for decorous lying.

4. A State Church supported by involuntary contributions from unwilling victims. This is the parent of a similar

practice among London, county, municipal, and district councils. Also among boards of guardians.

5. Foreign missions. These include a sad waste of money, the cost of punitive expeditions, the damage to industrial markets, the contempt of scientists, and the disgust of all philosophers.

6. The alliance of Convention and Christianity with Christianity and Convention. A fearful *mésalliance*.

7. The Irish priests, and a Christian dispensation for agrarian outrages.

8. The practice of making men dishonest by law, and driving them into a system of lies and subterfuges to escape the fines and penalties. The old church rates, followed by their offspring, compulsory cow-pox and compulsory education, are computed to have made liars of all brave men who are also poor. "Whenever you forbid a thing which is either permissible or necessary in Nature, you only make those who practise it

dishonest." So Montesquieu in 1704. In 1904 English Christians are still at it.

9. The over-valuation of human life. All Christians over-value themselves, their souls, and their mean little lives. Animals are accordingly under-valued. Animals may be dissected alive; a Christian may not even commit suicide. He should be asked to do it as a favour. Jesus died for him; let him return the compliment. Death does not hurt you, and, once it is over, you know no more. If life is too awful, die, by all means, and be done with it.

Another side of Christianity still remains to be discussed, and that is its relation to scepticism. A Christian regards a sceptic as something worse than an Ainu. A sceptic is a man of no principle, who never gets on his knees, as Christians do, and who, being destitute of divine guidance, is capable of any iniquity when the spirit moves him. Even so great a man as Dr. Johnson said

you might ask a freethinker to dinner, but you must first count the spoons. Probably this would apply to a Shintoist too. "The world by wisdom knows not God." Shintoism has a similar effect. A well-known newspaper distributing firm have repeatedly refused to allow any Freethinking paper to be seen or sold at their bookstalls. Yet morally these papers are far above the *Sun* or the *Star*, and other rays or rags that revel in divorce-court revelations, horrible outrages, and distressing details. How odd it seems that breach of promise cases, unmentionable rumours, rape, rapine, and robbery, together with gambling, murder, forgery, and arson, should be considered better reading, and on a different plane morally, from a paper that denies the divinity of the Lord. Horrible, horrible! Would this newspaper distributing firm sell the *Shintoist Kitasato*, with its imaginary Jutse Christo, Messiah of Tokio, who is crucified weekly with much pain and suffering? He re-arises

regularly without fail, but he is equally regularly re-crucified. It contains no divorce-court proceedings. These are peculiar to Christian countries. Other countries keep concubines.

Let us now leave the concrete Christian and his newspapers, and return to Christianity considered abstractly. Rational ethics are founded on utility. Christian ethics depend upon the laws of the Bible translated from the Hebrew, and the Church conception of that Hebrew. A Hebrew is not a specially fine type, and the Hebrew tongue is a singularly poor one; and the Hebrew land is an odd quarter to search for ethics in. The bother for a good Christian must be to compare his practices with what he says in church. What he does more resembles utilitarianism. What he says in church is called Christianity. To see the want of connection between what he says he believes and what he does, a man should attempt to analyse and exactly

estimate the extent of his belief. Is his belief that anyone will ever go to Paradise nearly as strong as his belief that the 11.45 will leave Paddington for Exeter to-morrow morning, or to-morrow morning twelve months on? Something of this kind was in the head of his wife when, at the death of Mr. Spurgeon, she sent her well-known telegram from Chicago to Exeter Hall: "Spurgeon left for Paradise 12.7 last night." The telegram was fixed on the notice-board outside Exeter Hall. In the course of the day a second telegram appeared beside it: "Spurgeon not yet arrived.—Peter." This trend of thought may prove beneficial some day. If a Christian would try to Bradshaw his faith, his views on ethics might improve. Many Christian virtues and sacred qualities now travelling "first" would be found to be fraudulently travelling in a wrong class. Some would be discovered to have third-class tickets, and others none at all. Some of

his a.m. or morning truths would become p.m. affairs, suitable, perhaps, at dessert over the nuts and port. The matin fasts might become express breakfasts. And as for the vespers, they would only start on Bank Holidays. He might have a rubric or notes to his Paradise service, after the manner of Mr. *Punch's* time-table. Note 5: First-class elect express. Note 9: Does not run on week-days nor on alternate Sundays, except in June; see Note 17. Note 17: Third only arrive. This would aptly illustrate the difficulties of transit. Enter ye the narrow gate, but with a ticket. A coupon in the trouser is a trustier passport than a crucifix on the chest.

Many other things might be noted. Foreign missions would soon be seen to be indefensible, and to resemble paganism or Paiderastia. They evidence interest in the heathen and an affection for him taking an improper course. Blasphemy would be seen to be nothing, and

much more harmless than hymn-singing in the train. The latter is a favourite practice of the earnest soul-saver. And, if the soul-saver laughs at Shinto, may not we jest at Jesus? Then the bookstalls. Again no blasphemy—only obscenity, indecencies, murders, and fights filling the papers. Why? Because Christians like them. Jokes on Jesus? No, illegal—*i.e.*, disliked by a Christian. Then places of refreshment for the most part closed on Sundays. What Christian charity!

There are many forms of immorality almost peculiar to Christians. The cause is the confused sense of ethics resulting from the religion. Here are a few minor ones :—

Travelling first-class with a third-class ticket, which is essentially a wrong action, is exceedingly common among Christians, particularly those who affect Socialism. It resembles paying for a plain bun and surreptitiously pocketing

a bath one. Hindoos never do it. Yankee trippers in England would do so always if it were not for the troublesome practices of ticket collectors. Yet Christians, doing this, consider that a man, though travelling in his right class, who scoffed at Jesus has committed an unwarrantable offence. As recently as 1883 three secularists were sent to prison by Mr. Justice North for publishing amusing prints connected with Jahveh and Jesus.

A Christian temperance reformer would not hesitate to drink a glass of beer in a public-house after closing time, and refuse to pay for it, if he thought that by so doing he could confiscate the licence and close another "house." Yet a man wishing to close State churches who contrived to enter and drink a cup of sacramental wine has committed sacrilege. No hour of the night, no intensity of desire, would excuse him. Even if he left the price of a bottle on a

prayer-book near the altar, it would still be sacrilege, and punishable by death up to 1861. In 1861 a wave of Christian charity wafted through these Christian lands, and the penalty was altered to penal servitude for life. The offence is now classed as larceny, but larceny of an abominably odious nature, similar to that of taking away the last penny from a dying woman under pretence of intending to bring her a recuperating drug from the nearest chemist. Needless to say, far the foulest action of the three, intrinsically considered, is that of the Christian temperance reformer.

In many English districts the Christian Chairman of a Council, who perpetually runs up sanatoriums, fever hospitals, libraries, and baths, of any material out of other people's pockets, may be made a knight, if the debt which he has conferred on the district is sufficiently large. But a private person who erects one wooden bungalow on his own land and with his

own money is fined. Evasion by means of astute lying is the only means of escape.

A clergyman, entirely without invitation, explains to inquirers in church or out of it the mystery of the Trinity. He may use charms, chemistry, and sacred relics. Every taxpayer contributes something towards his salary. But a man who invites you to discover the mystery of three cards and spot the lady is sent to prison. You pay him nothing, unless you wish to back yourself, and the whole proceeding is entirely voluntary. If either is to be imprisoned, it should be the clergyman.

A young guardsman will omit to pay his tailor, his hosier, and his hat or busby maker, and he will lie to his parent or guardian on such matters whenever necessary. But a guardsman who went to a London dance in a made-up tie would not remain in the regiment. Conventionality in the guards supersedes Christianity. At root they are the same.

Jacob, an idol of the Church, has sometimes been blamed for marrying two sisters without waiting for the funeral of the first. He also robbed Esau of his birthright by counterfeiting his hairs and deluding Joseph. The first, notwithstanding the Church, is not essentially wrong; the second is.

Two quaint and curious instances of crimes in the court of conventionality may relieve the monotony of our selections.

A boy was mentioned some time ago in a sporting paper as having been given a wreath to put on his mother's grave. He, however, did not do this. He kept the wreath till the evening, and threw it to a chorus girl on the stage at a Music Hall. As a fact, though negatively much was wanting, his action is not positively and essentially wrong, nor even wicked. Admiration for feminine beauty is right and proper. It is only his method of testifying this that is to blame.

A gentleman in a west-end club in

1901 lost his wife. He made arrangements to have her buried in Brompton Cemetery about 3.30 p.m. At two he arrived at his club in a four-wheeler with his wife in a coffin on the top of the cab. He left the cab waiting outside the club. He entered the club and had lunch and a pint of champagne. He then came out smoking a cigar and took the coffin down to Brompton and buried her. The club committee made a fearful hullabaloo, and he had to leave the club. His action, however, is not essentially wrong nor wicked. Plenty, no doubt, can be said against it, and his friends might drop him; but compared to omitting to pay a trade or card debt, or taking another member's umbrella purposely, or sitting on one magazine while reading another, or invariably looking at the bottom card when playing at Piquet—compared with any of these his action is harmless. His fault is merely one of omission in that he lacks consideration for average tastes and

feelings; the other acts are positively and essentially wrong. Nevertheless, nearly all, except his, are done every day in every club in London.

Such things extend through the whole of English life. Even women must not be forgotten, for they are much worse than men. If committing murder be excepted, for which the penalty is so dreadful, hardly a woman in England would not break all the Commandments in succession, one after another, rather than saunter down the Hyde Park Church Parade in "rationals" some summer day in June. Perhaps human nature would be partially responsible for this as well as Christianity. Anyhow, women atone for such failings by being dutiful in church. All the responses and all the congregational singing in churches are done by women. Apparently all the women in England sing, and but very few men; though, as far as can be judged, some English men can sing, but no English

women. Foreigners are therefore used, except in churches and for music halls.

There is a deal to wonder at in England. But first and foremost is the fact that you have produced by far the greatest thinker who has ever lived—Herbert Spencer. He wrote for you in English, and you, none of you, have read him, except one or two students as a text-book, and before they were old enough to understand him. Christianity again! The best Christians take up Christianity when young; the older they get the less they see in it. Herbert Spencer is the reverse. Like Shakespeare, he cannot be properly understood, much less appreciated, till the reader is twenty-five. Youthful appreciation is eminently adapted to the Bible, but not to "Social Statics." But the Bible (can you believe it?) was not written in English for the English. No, really? It was written in Hebrew, by Hebrews, for Hebrews. It seems almost incredible that, in 1904,

educated and intelligent Englishmen should accept a rigmarole of old Hebrew legends as a counsellor and guide when they have Herbert Spencer's "Data of Ethics" by their side, written in their own language and awaiting their attention. Bible reading is compulsory in your State schools. Why? Do you really see anything in it? Virgil and Homer contain much rubbish—the Bible contains more still. Do you imagine the whole of the Bible to be as valuable as a single page of Spencer's "Data of Ethics"? The "Data of Ethics" contains 288 pages. It is published at three shillings. It gives every rule of life and conduct clearly stated and completely proved. Yet you prefer the Bible, or what a rector recommends as his idea of it! The Bible was written for foreigners; the translation may be inaccurate. The English is good of its kind, but so is Froissart's. It contains 1,600 pages of a similar size to the 288

of the "Data of Ethics." Not a single statement is proved, and nine-tenths of it is false. It is about as valuable as Hans Christian Andersen or Grimm's Household Fairy Tales. The only way for Christians to improve is to use their Bible as shaving paper, and, as a punishment for such sacrilege, to read ten pages daily of the "Data of Ethics." Men soon would prefer the natural to the supernatural. They would become more rational and morally better. They would find that the laws of Nature apply to man in common with all other matter, animate or inanimate. There are no exceptions in favour of worms, monkeys, or even parsons. He would find also that right and wrong are quite clear, and depend on the laws of Nature, and not on a Trinity, glorified but difficult to understand.

"Against stupidity the very gods fight in vain. There is in it an opulence of murky stagnancy, an inexhaustibility, a calm infinitude which will baffle even the gods—which will say calmly, 'Yes, try all your lightnings here; see whether my dark belly cannot hold them!'" —T. CARLYLE.

SOME VALUABLE CHRISTIAN DATES

It has been said that "the enthusiasm of those who love a bull fight pales before the religious ardour of the servant girl mentioned by Swift, who walked seven miles, in a torrent of rain, to see a Catholic hanged, and returned sobbing bitterly because there had been a reprieve."

Heresy and spiritual *offences* were, until the reign of Constantine A.D. 306, punished by excommunication only. Shortly after this capital punishment was added, and inquisitors were appointed by Theodosius A.D. 382. The *offence* of heresy is peculiar to Christianity.

A.D. 385. Priscillian is put to death for a spiritual offence.

A.D. 529. A penal code of a peculiarly bloody nature is established by Justinian

and continues for over a thousand years.

A.D. 1160. "Thirty heretics came from Germany to England to propagate their opinions. They were branded in the foreheads (by the religious authorities), flogged, and thrust naked into the streets in the depth of winter, where, none daring to relieve them, they died of hunger and cold."

A.D. 1252. Pietro de Verona (styled Peter the Martyr), the first inquisitor to introduce burning alive for heretics, as well as torture and capital punishment, is assassinated by a Gonfalonier, accused of this *crime* on April 6th, 1252. Pietro is canonised! Would not crucifixion have done, while he was still warm?

A.D. 1481. Nearly 3,000 persons are burnt alive for heresy in Andalusia. One could understand it if they had been blacks. And 17,000 others suffered various penalties from torture to beggary. [In England, in 1904, a man can be reduced to beggary for refusing to cow-

pox his own child, or for refusing to send it to the State schools, but not for heresy.]

A.D. 1626. The last person *executed for heresy* in Great Britain is Thomas Aikenhead at Edinburgh. Isaac Newton was born in 1642, and died without suffering this penalty.

A.D. 1781. A woman accused of making a contract with the Devil is burnt at Sevile on November 7th. Hume died in 1776, but he was neither read nor mentioned by Christians.

A.D. 1712. Five witches are hung at Northampton. John Wesley, the great religious reformer, held, from 1636 to the day of his death, "*that giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible.*" The Act, however, mentioning witchcraft had already been given up. The Bible has not yet been given up except in the East.

A.D. 1904. Bishop Ingram asks for legislation and guineas to suppress wantonness in flats.

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